



**CMEAA**  
COMMISSION ON MIDDLE EASTERN  
AMERICAN AFFAIRS  
M I C H I G A N

**Meeting Minutes**  
**October 27<sup>th</sup>, 2016, 12:00 P.M.**  
CNSI  
6465 Millennium Dr. #150  
Lansing, MI 48917

**ATTENDANCE:**

**Commissioners Present:**

Manal Saab, Chair  
Michael Romaya, Vice Chair  
Sharif Hussein, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-Chair  
Lina Harajli, Treasurer  
Suzanne Sukkar, Secretary

Mariam Bazzi, Trustee  
Bing Goei, Ex-Officio  
Wendy Acho  
Abe Munfakh

**Excused:** Helen Habib, Bishr Al-Ujayli, Susan Dabaja, Fay Beydoun, Dave Abdallah, Haifa Fakhouri, Adel Mozip

**Staff:** Mike Zimmer-Governor's Cabinet Director, Nicholas Payne-GOV, Ron Robinson-Assistant Attorney General, Nancy Short-LARA, Justine Foy-LARA, Raya Fares-CMEAA Coordinator

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chair Manal Saab at 11:55 p.m. Roll call was taken and a quorum was present.

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

**MOTION: Commissioner Sukkar moved to accept the agenda. Motion supported by Commissioner Hussein. Motion passed.**

III. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

**MOTION: Commissioner Sukkar moved to accept the minutes of September 8, 2016. Motion supported by Commissioner Munfakh. Motion passed unanimously.**

IV. CHAIR'S REMARKS

Chair Saab thanked the commissioners and staff present and noted their continued attendance at each meeting demonstrates their commitment to the commission.

V. TREASURER'S REPORT

Commissioner Harajli reviewed the Spending Plan with the commission and explained each line item. Commissioner Harajli was able to answer and clarify any questions the commission had.

Chair Saab noted that CMEAA has requested for a budget increase for 2018.

**MOTION: Commissioner Romaya moved to accept the CMEAA Treasurer's Report. Motion supported by Commissioner Hussein. Commissioner Munfakh opposed. Motion passed.**

VI. RFP

Commissioner Bazzi presented an update from the RFP Committee. Commissioner Bazzi encourages the commissioners to mention any specifics they would like in the RFP. Commissioner Bazzi noted that she will email a copy of the RFP to the commission.

VII. LARA/MONA DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

Director Goei described the progress happening in MONA. Director Goei reports that MONA is working on making more resources known to the ethnic communities. Director Bing elaborated to the commission that a common issue for all ethnic commissions is bullying, ESL and need for emigrant resources. He's proud to announce that the three ethnic commissions are working together. Director Goei is proud of all the accomplishments of MITS and looks forward to working together with the commissions.

Director Zimmer informed the commission of an ABC show which poorly portrayed the MEA community and the State of Michigan. The commission discussed the idea of preparing a statement against the show, the Waterford refugee ban, and addressing the misconception and poor portrayal of MEA in Michigan.

Director Goei expressed the Joint Legislative Committee's efforts to provide a joint statement by all three commissions addressing misconceptions and stereotypes of all the ethnic communities and provide an update back to the Executive Committee.

Deputy Director Phillippi updated the commission on the state of refugees in Michigan. Between October 1, 2015 and September 30, 2016, 4350 refugees

were resettled in Michigan. Michigan State Police Department has created a program to educate law enforcement officers on cultural competency, as well as educating refugees on law enforcement protocol. Deputy Director Phillippi discussed the ESL RFP which was emailed to Chair Saab. She has encouraged the commissioners to apply.

VIII. ACTION ITEM: 2017 Proposed Meeting Schedule

Commissioner Munfakh volunteers to host the February 8<sup>th</sup> meeting at ACC in Troy. Commissioner Harajli volunteers to host the May 17<sup>th</sup> meeting at The Annex at the Arab American National Museum. Commissioner Hussein volunteers to coordinate details of the September 14<sup>th</sup> meeting in Lansing. Commissioner Sukkar volunteers to host the December 14<sup>th</sup> meeting at Dickinson Wright in Ann Arbor.

**MOTION: Commissioner Bazzi moves to accept the 2017 Meeting Schedule. Motion supported by Commissioner Harajli Motion passed unanimously.**

IX. TOWN HALL MEETINGS

Coordinator Raya Fares discussed the findings from the 6 town hall meetings. The refugee crisis, the perception of MEA and resource awareness were the top three areas of concern. Coordinator Raya Fares asked the commission for assistance in creating solutions to the areas of concern.

A lengthy conversation followed on the outcome of the town hall meeting and next steps. The Chair suggested holding a retreat in the future, reaching out to all that attended, as an outreach tool addressing community's concerns. Most importantly, developing a tool kit such as a resource handbook of state and federal services available that could be shared with our community. It is evident that refugees are in the forefront of our community's concerns. Much work is needed in this area that will involve various organizations represented by the respective members of CMEAA. It was agreed to allocate a segment of the agenda at the next meeting to continue the development of a resource handbook and community outreach.

X. PATRIOTS & PEACEMAKERS EXHIBIT

Chair Saab invited all commissioners to the Patriots & Peacemakers exhibit in Flint on Thursday, November 10 at The University of Michigan-Flint at the Thompson Library.

XI. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

XII. NEW BUSINESS

None.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 1:22 p.m. by Chair Saab.



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Suzanne K. Sukkar, Secretary



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Manal B. Saab, Chair